

COMPETITIONS.—Advertisements have been issued for plans, &c., for a new workhouse in the Erpingham Union, for 500 persons: premium offered, 50*l.* or a commission;—also for designs and estimates for the erection of a church and schools in the Marsh, Stratford, Essex: no terms specified;—also for a plan and estimate for building thirty cottages at Chertsey.

THE SHOP-BLIND NUISANCE.—A Dudley 'six-feet' correspondent of the *Birmingham Journal* indignantly complains of a local nuisance, such as that already no less indignantly denounced in *THE BUILDER* as a metropolitan one—that is, the shop window-blind, or awning-tackle nuisance. "Is it to be endured," he asks, "that while in the very act of returning with studied elegance the salute of some fair friend, your 'chapeau' shall be dashed from your apex into the kennel by some infernal machine fixed in mid air? a machine evidently originated by some fiend of a shopkeeper for the express purpose of malicious annoyance to pedestrians." We cannot but sympathise with the Dudleyite, seeing that we have suffered but too often under a like infliction, not exactly such as he may have met with, while, 'with his beaver up,' in the pride of one of those studied flourishes of elegance which occasionally, we must admit, deserve to meet with so summary a downfall from the sublime to the ridiculous, but, on the contrary, while with much more staid, if not more studied manner, threading our way through a metropolitan thoroughfare. We had even determined on a public-spirited, but probably Quixotic crusade against these worse than windmills, in the Strand, the other day; but confess we were, *pro tem.* at least, seduced from our valiant purpose by a highly satisfactory solatium on the majesty of our person, administered, by way of "soft sawder," by a graceful Dulcinea del Strando, who pleaded guilty to the not very 'soft' impeachment of elevating one of these levelling engines a foot or two too low, at least for our 'elevation' above the pavement, in front of her 'emporium.'

ORDNANCE SURVEY.—On Monday some returns connected with the Ordnance survey were printed. A list is given of the towns in Ireland surveyed, on the scale of 60 inches to a mile. The surveys were not made for the purpose of sanitary improvement. They were commenced in 1830, and finished in 1843: the expense was 863,206*l.* It appears that the area of Ireland is 20,878,482 acres. In Great Britain it appears that Southampton and Windsor only have been surveyed for sanitary purposes. The cost of the preparation for Southampton was 1,240*l.* 12*s.*—the area was 3,356 acres;—whilst, for Windsor, it was 331*l.* 17*s.* 9*d.*; the plan embracing an area of 1,212 acres.

ART IN PARIS.—A commission of reform, composed of artists, has been instituted in Paris, to examine into the constitution and condition of the school of fine arts there and those of the Academy at Rome, and to propose measures for their improvement. Some curious hoards of objects of art of various kinds have been discovered in the Louvre, and a commission has been appointed to examine them. —The competition for the symbol of the Republic, consisting of five hundred designs, is said to be a failure. The collection contains few designs of any merit.

COMPOUND IRON BEAMS OR GIRDERS.—In a specification, enrolled May 9, 1848, of the patent of Mr. Henry Fielder, Maida Vale, it is stated that the lower or tension flanges are made wholly or partly of malleable iron, while the centre ribs and upper or crushing flanges are wholly or partly of cast iron, according to the duties they may have to perform. The malleable iron is united to the cast iron by hot riveting, and in all cases in such proportion that it shall be able to support, alone, the estimated weight to which the whole girder may be subjected, and so prove efficient in case of fracture of the cast-iron portion. The specification also comprehends the application of the principle to the strengthening or repairing of existing beams or girders, and to the construction of beams or girders composed entirely of malleable iron, in which case the flanges are united to the centre rib by angle iron, the coupling joints headed, and the whole fastened together by hot riveting.

ARMSTRONG'S HYDRAULIC ENGINES.—We are glad to perceive, from accounts forwarded to us from Liverpool and Newcastle, that the ingenious invention of Messrs. W. G. Armstrong and Co., of Newcastle,* already noticed in our columns, is in course of multiplication, especially at Liverpool, as a power adapted to use for warehouse and ship cranes,—a subject of the utmost importance to that and every other port, for the economization of manual labour. The moving power at Liverpool is the pressure of the water supplied from the mains of the Green-lane water-works, whereby a couple of tons of goods can now be hoisted in a few seconds to the highest floor of a building almost without human aid at all. It is said to work with great precision and delicacy. Our confident prognostications of the immense diffusion of such a power for various purposes, long since published in *THE BUILDER*, are thus in course of fulfilment. A modification of the same principle, approximating closely to the steam-engine, has been recently put in operation at Newcastle, where, as we have already noticed, quay cranes have been for some time in use. The *Newcastle Journal*, in describing this new engine says, "Certain it is that all impediments to the attainment of high speed and easy motion are removed in this engine, and there appears to be every probability of its coming into extensive use, not only in cases where steam-engines are considered objectionable, but, also, for many purposes where it will be found more economical than steam, and in others where it will be applied in substitution of manual labour. We congratulate Messrs. W. G. Armstrong and Co. on the production of this engine, which is novel and ingenious in design and beautiful in workmanship." It is worked without waste of water at all by means of slide valves opening into pistons acted on through two separate pipes, "by the pressure of the Carr's Hill water on the one side, and by the opposing pressure of the Gallowgate water on the other, the engines being consequently put in motion by a force equal to the difference between the two pressures [82*lbs.* on the square inch]. By this means the water, instead of being run to waste, merely passes from one set of pipes to the other, and remains available for the use of the town."

LINEN FIRED BY SOLAR HEAT.—In the case of a fire which occurred on Monday week, in a warehouse at St. Paul's Churchyard, Mr. Braidwood reports to the insurance offices that the cause of it was the firing of a linen curtain first at the open part of a window. It seems doubtful, however, whether by "the open part" of the window he means that the sash was open, or merely that the fire originated by the solar action through the glass where exposed openly to the solar ray. The heat was lately, it is said, 21 degrees above the average of the same time of the year for twenty-five years past; but the firing of linen by the un-concentrated rays of an English sun in May, would be a phenomenon likely to startle the linen-clad denizens of the tropical south.

DISCHARGE OF WORKMEN WITHOUT NOTICE.—At Bedlington, lately, it was decided in court that a notice posted up by employers to the effect that every workman was to give three weeks' notice previous to leaving his employment, implied a like understanding on the part of the masters towards the workmen, and the bench decided accordingly, except in cases where it was proved that the men had on several occasions quitted work to speak to others,—in fact, to advise them to strike for higher wages, the real reason of their summary dismissal.

BRITISH GLASS.—In an official document presented to Parliament, and lately printed, it is stated that the quantities of British glass exported in the year ending the 5th January last, were as follows:—Flint glass, 17,858 cwt.; window glass, 29,804 cwt.; plate glass, 41,879 superficial feet; common glass bottles, 227,844.

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY has been formed in Scarborough. The objects of the society are to promote antiquarian research in the neighbourhood, and to illustrate and make interesting the history of ages past, by those memorials of them which have been or may be found.

* Are these the gentlemen who discovered the singular principle of "Armstrong's hydro-electric boiler," first announced from the vicinity of Newcastle?

WINCHFELD CHURCH, HANTS.—This is a very interesting structure of the Norman period, and is well worthy of a passing visit. The tower is 25 feet square at the base, but the upper part is modern, apparently built after a portion of the original had fallen down. The western doorway is a good example, with columns and zig-zag decorations; and the arches between the tower, and nave internally, and the nave and chancel, are beautiful, especially the latter. The windows in the chancel are enriched internally with the zig-zag ornament. On the northern side are the remains of an Early English doorway, and at the eastern end there is a triple lancet window. Perhaps the most interesting part of the building to an antiquary would be the curious rude paintings on the outside of the tower. The old part of the tower has been plastered over, and on the upper portion of it is painted a scallop running round the tower, and on the west front above that are represented dragons crossing their forked tongues in the centre: three dragons seem to be issuing out of other dragons, and underneath appear to be the figures of human beings. An external decoration of this sort is rare. The pulpit bears the date of 1634.

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF WOOD, a patent has been taken out in France by M.M. Hutin and Boutigny, the principle of which consists in the assimilation of the antiseptic substance with the vegetable itself, in place of impregnation with corrosive sublimate, or the chlorides of zinc, calcium, iron, &c., which have been found, it is said, to tear the woody fibre asunder by the irresistible force of crystallization. On the new principle, nothing more is necessary than simply to immerse the ends of each piece to be preserved in any of the hydro-carbons—such as the oil of schiet, and set on fire the ends of the pieces thus treated, letting them burn until all the applied hydro-carbon is burned out—when they must be immediately dipped into a hot mixture of pitch, tar, and shellac, and may then be painted, tarred, &c. M. Gemini, in a paper read to the Paris Academy, testifies to the destruction of fibres by the usual processes, and recommends tar, creosote, naphtha, or any of the highly-bituminised articles, easily and economically obtained.

STONEHOUSE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE COMPETITION.—We understand, with respect to the competition for the Stonehouse Mechanics' Institute, that, at a special meeting of the committee, held on the 9th inst., to receive the report of the sub-committee appointed to investigate the plans submitted by architects, a design was adopted, which was afterwards found to be by Messrs. Fuller and Gingell of Bristol. There were about twenty designs sent in.

CHRIST CHURCH, EAST GREENWICH.—Last week a supper was given by the committee for erecting Christ Church, East Greenwich (Messrs. Brown and Kerr architects) to all the parties employed upon it, on the occasion of the roof being covered in. About 70 persons sat down. These kindly gatherings have a good effect; they make all parties feel personally interested in the success of the work.

NAIL MAKING.—We are told this branch of trade is likely soon to receive a strong impetus by the operations of the British and Foreign Patent Nail Company, who are about to commence their works. It is said that the nails manufactured by the machinery are of a first-class description, though produced at an expense which will enable them to be sold at a lower price than is paid for the most common cut nails. It seems that the whole nail—head, body, and point—is made at the same time, and simply by one operation of the machine.

IRON PIPES CAST IN TRUE CONCENTRIC CYLINDERS.—The patent invention by Mr. D. Y. Stewart, of Montrose, now of Glasgow, described in *THE BUILDER*, Vol. V., page 522, has been favourably reported on by Professor Miller, of the Philosophical Society, Glasgow, and Mr. P. Wilson, head master of the Western Collegiate Institution there.

ARCHITECTURAL CONVERSAZIONE.—Mr. S. Angell, late Vice-President of the Institute of Architects, received the members of that body, and many persons eminent in art and science, on Thursday evening, at his house, in Gower-street.